Microsoft Word®

Follow these best practices to help ensure your documents are accessible. For more information on Word® document accessibility, visit mn.gov/mnit/accessibility

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- **Use document styles**

  Use heading and paragraph styles to structure the document.

- **Add alt-text to images and objects**

  This includes pictures, clip art, charts, shapes, SmartArt graphics and embedded objects. Use clear, concise terms. For example, "Person in wheelchair on ramp" may suffice rather than "Smiling woman in wheelchair posing on ramp."

- **Use short titles in headings**

  Keep headings short (fewer than 20 words or one line long). This makes it easy for readers to quickly navigate your document.

- **Name your hyperlinks appropriately**

  Your link should contain meaningful text that reflects the link destination or subject, rather than simply saying "click here."

- **Use simple table structure**

  Avoid using nested tables, merged or split cells, or blank cells for formatting.

- **Set column header rows in tables**

  Clear column headings provide context and assist navigation of the table contents. Bookmarks are also a useful tool.

- **Avoid using repeated blank characters**

  Extra spaces, tabs and empty paragraphs can cause people using screen readers to repeatedly hear the word "blank." Instead, use styles with formatting and indenting to create white space.

- **Avoid using floating objects**

  Place objects in-line with text for easy navigation.

- **Avoid watermarks**

  Watermarks and other background images may be hidden or confusing to people with vision or cognitive disabilities. Instead of using a watermark to identify a document as a "draft" or "confidential," include the text in the document title or heading.

- **Fill in document properties**

  In advanced document properties, enter title, subject, and author.

- **Use the Accessibility Checker**

  This built-in tool will tell you about possible accessibility issues in your document and give suggestions on how to correct them.

The Office of
Accessibility
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